DR. BALGUY'S

SERMON

PREACHED AT

LAMBETH CHAPEL,

FEBRUARY 12, 1769.

[Price One Shilling.]

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

LAMBETH CHAPEL,

ON

THE CONSECRATION

OF

The Right Rev. JONATHAN SHIPLEY, D. D.
Lord Biſhop of LANDAFF,

FEBRUARY 12, 1769.

By THOMAS BALGUY, D. D.
Archdeacon of WINCHESTER.

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THE CONSECRATION

OF

GABRIEL SHAW,

PREACHED AT

SEKONDI.

HEBREWS xiii. 7.

OBEY THEM THAT HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU, AND SUBMIT YOURSELVES; FOR THEY WATCH FOR YOUR SOULS.

OBEDIENCE and authority are reciprocal terms. A right in another to *rule over us*, and a duty in us to *ſubmit ourſelves*, are but one and the ſame thing differently expreſſed.

IT has never been doubted, that the authority of which the Apoſtle here ſpeaks, is Church-authority. This indeed ſufficiently appears from the reaſon aſſigned for our ſubjection. We are to obey our governors, becauſe they *watch for our ſouls:* a circumſtance which clearly points out Spiritual authority, and diſtinguiſhes it from Civil.

It muſt be owned, however, that in ſaying this we ſay but little: and, if we advance one ſtep farther, we ſhall find ourſelves expoſed to variety of doubts and queſtions, ſome of conſiderable importance; which the bare words of Scripture will never enable us to reſolve. Even the ableſt critics have waſted their time and pains in this unprofitable ſearch; a ſearch where neither ſkill in languages nor knowledge of antiquity could contribute any thing to their ſucceſs.

It is in this inſtance as in many others. Men conſult Scripture for what is not to be found in it; an accurate deſcription of their rights and duties: whereas the knowlege of theſe is ſuppoſed, not taught, by the ſacred writers. There was a time, when men were under the ſame deluſion with regard to their Civil obligations: when both the origin and the form of government, the extent of authority and degree of ſubjection, were determined, not from the reaſons of things, or the laws of particular nations, but from the precedents and precepts contained in the Bible; a book never intended for ſuch purpoſes, and indeed much injured by the artifice and violence with which it has been preſſed into a foreign ſervice.

It might well have been expected, that the members of the Engliſh Church ſhould have ſeen farther, and judged better:

better: becauſe *this* Church, even from its foundation, has been carefully inſtructed on theſe very points by ſome of its ableſt defenders. But ſo capricious is the public taſte, that theſe great writers have gradually fallen into neglect: their doctrines are now in a manner forgotten; and enthuſiaſts and ſectaries revive the ſame follies, and defend them by the ſame arguments, which were once effectually overthrown.—It may not therefore be improper for us to reſume this beaten ſubject; and try if we can explain, on rational principles, the nature and foundation of Church-authority. The Sacred Writings, ſo far as they can be pertinently alleged, will be found to confirm, not to oppoſe, the dictates of reaſon.

To this end, let us begin with fixing the general idea of a Church; by which I underſtand a number of perſons agreeing to unite in public aſſemblies for the performance of religious duties.—Theſe duties, under moſt forms of religion, will comprehend public *inſtruction* and public *worſhip*.

For the ſake of ſimplicity, I will firſt ſuppoſe the *whole* Church to conſiſt of a *ſingle* congregation: we ſhall afterwards ſee, what difference may ariſe, when *many* congregations become parts of the ſame ſociety.

GIVE me leave to ſuppoſe farther, that the Civil magiſtrate no way concerns himſelf in theſe religious meetings: we ſhall afterwards ſee what difference may ariſe, when he aſſumes the *ſupremacy* in eccleſiaſtical affairs.

1. WE begin then with a ſmall number of men, capable of meeting conveniently for religious purpoſes in one *ſingle congregation*; the magiſtrate neither requiring nor forbidding them to meet, neither directing nor reſtraining them when they are come together.

AND here the firſt queſtion to be aſked is, why do they meet at all? How will public aſſemblies conduce to the better performance of religious duties?—The anſwer is obvious. By meeting together in a public aſſembly, men are led to perform the offices of Religion, more conſtantly, more properly, and more effectually. More *conſtantly:* becauſe there can be no meetings held without *ſtated times* of meeting; whereas private acts of Religion may be performed at any time, and are therefore at all times in danger of neglect. More *properly:* becauſe each man's peculiar follies will be checked, and his peculiar infirmities relieved, by the united wiſdom of all. And more *effectually:* becauſe public acts of Religion will both make a ſtronger impreſſion on thoſe who partake in them, and at the ſame time afford a teſtimony and an example to other men.

BUT

But nothing of all this can be carried into execution, if each particular member of a Religious ſociety be allowed to ſpeak and to act in it, *what*, *when*, and *how* he pleaſes. It is therefore highly expedient, if not abſolutely neceſſary, that the offices of Religion ſhould be committed to ſome certain perſons, and regulated in ſome certain manner: to what perſons, and in what manner, the ſociety itſelf muſt judge, or muſt appoint others to judge for them.

By the deſignation of particular perſons, many advantages are obtained. *Firſt*, the offices are regularly *performed:* whereas, without ſuch an appointment, they would often be neglected; for ſuch neglect we continually experience in all thoſe inſtances of duty, to which no one man is peculiarly obliged. *Secondly*, they are performed without *competition* or *confuſion*; the unavoidable conſequences of unbounded liberty. *Thirdly*, they are much more likely to be performed as they *ought* to be. This at leaſt muſt be true under every form of Religion, that requires attention and ſtudy in thoſe who are to teach it. For every man in ſociety is, or ſhould be, employed in ſome uſeful labour or profeſſion; which muſt engage of courſe his time and his thoughts, and divert him from every other purſuit. Religion then itſelf muſt be made a profeſſion; or no man will be at leiſure to learn and to teach it. Whence it follows that each ſingle congre-

congregation, whilſt unconnected with others, muſt *appoint* for itſelf miniſters of Religion, and *ſupport* this appointment by a voluntary maintenance. For no man will give his time to the public, unleſs excited by public rewards: no man can give his whole time, without expoſing himſelf to want and ruin.

Nor are the perſons only to be appointed for performance of Religious duties; but the manner alſo is to be preſcribed. The aſſembly may not unfrequently be deceived in their choice; and the miniſters, if ſubject to no reſtraint, may introduce principles and practices which the people condemn. Or it may happen, that one miniſter ſhall purſue a different plan from another; perhaps a contrary plan: which muſt evidently tend to confound the minds of the people, and weaken the impreſſions of Religion. If the difference be not in form only but in doctrine, the caſe will be ſtill worſe. For nothing is ſo apt to root out all Religion, both from men's heads and hearts, as religious controverſy. A great part of mankind, either from want of capacity or opportunity, are governed by authority more than reaſon. What then ſhall they do, when they meet with oppoſite authorities? Or, if they attempt to exerciſe their feeble underſtandings, and to judge for themſelves; how muſt they be embarraſſed by ſpecious and plauſible arguments, alleged with equal confidence on both ſides?—The conſequences are evident. Either they will divide into parties,

to the deſtruction of charity; or, unable to determine among different pretenders to truth, they will give up the purſuit as deſperate, and ſurrender themſelves to univerſal ſcepticiſm.

TRUTH, we are told, can never ſuffer from a free inquiry: the combat perhaps may be ſharp; but ſhe is ſure to conquer in the end. Men are not therefore to be reſtrained from profeſſing their opinions, or from ſupporting them either by their pens or tongues.—All this I am ready to allow: yet ſtill it may be maintained, that *religious aſſemblies* ſhould be carefully guarded from ſuch conteſts: conteſts that defeat the main end for which theſe aſſemblies are appointed, and train up men to ſophiſtry inſtead of Religion.

HERE then we have the firſt ſketch of what may be called not improperly *Church-authority*. For, a power in the ſociety of *appointing* its miniſters implies an *excluſion* of others from the miniſterial office. No man therefore can undertake this office without ſuch appointment, or oppoſe the perſons who are appointed lawfully: unleſs he will ſet his own private will in oppoſition to the will of the whole ſociety; by doing which he renders himſelf incapable of continuing a member. To *declare* this incapacity, is to *excommunicate*.—In like manner, a power in the ſociety of *preſcribing* the forms of its public offices,

 implies

implies an *exclusion* of every other form. No minister therefore can depart in any respect from the public institution, much less act in contradiction to it, without usurping a power not committed to him, but residing in the body by whom he is authorized and employed. If he does this, he violates the trust reposed in him, and so renders himself unfit to be trusted. The consequence is, *deprivation* from his office, and from the rewards attending it.

It is not however necessary, indeed it is not possible, that even this small society should all *agree* in every particular determination. The smaller part therefore must acquiesce in the judgment of the greater; or they must form themselves into a separate congregation.—It is not even necessary for all the members to be *assembled*; whether for making their regulations, or inforcing them. Instead of exercising their power *collectively*, they may commit it, if they please, and as much as they please, to *representatives*: nay, they may very properly commit the *executive* part of it to a *single* person. In short, various forms of government may be assigned; any one of which would be sufficient for the ends proposed, of appointing ministers, of prescribing forms, of inforcing obedience.

2. The consideration of this simple case will lead to a solution of such as are more complex. Let us go on then

then to inquire into the nature of religious ſociety, as ſubſiſting among a *number* of *congregations* united into one body.

And here again the main queſtion will be, to what purpoſe ſhould they unite? How will the ends of religious aſſemblies be better obtained by an aſſociation among *many*, than if *each* aſſembly had the ſole and ſeparate management of its own concerns?—I anſwer, the benefits of ſociety are the ſame in this inſtance as in others. That is, the ends propoſed will be purſued more wiſely and more uniformly: more *wiſely*, by the advantage of common conſultation; more *uniformly*, by the concurrence of all particular aſſemblies in the reſolutions taken by the whole community.

Thus, for inſtance, in a large and more comprehenſive ſociety, it will be leſs difficult to ſelect *fit perſons* for performing the offices of Religion. In ſingle congregations it muſt often happen, that few or none of the members are competently qualified either to ſerve thoſe offices themſelves, or to chuſe others. But, in a number of congregations, under different circumſtances, and diffuſed perhaps through different parts of an extenſive kingdom, we may both expect a better ſupply of candidates, and a truer judgement of their merits. For, though it is not always true, yet it is generally true, even in popular aſſemblies,

that the weak are led by the wiſe.—This however would be arguing on the moſt unfavourable ſuppoſition. For there is no neceſſity that the miniſters of Religion ſhould be appointed by the people; and much expedience in a different method of appointment. Even ſingle congregations, if they think proper, *may* act by repreſentation; as I before took notice: but a number of congregations, united in one community, *cannot*, without the higheſt inconvenience, act *otherwiſe*. We ſee in *civil* ſocieties, even of the freeſt kind, that, however the people may have reſerved to themſelves the ſupreme legiſlative authority, yet the ordinary adminiſtration of government is committed either to a prince or a ſenate. By a like delegation of power, either ſingle men, or ſmall bodies of men, may and *muſt* be authorized to govern the Church: to them muſt be committed the care of chuſing fit perſons for diſcharging the offices of religion; and from them we may reaſonably expect a much wiſer and ſafer choice, than from the caprice and folly of every particular congregation.

In like manner, and for nearly the ſame reaſons, more ſkill may be expected from a larger ſociety, or from the perſons appointed to govern them, in preſcribing the rules and forms of public Religion. One man may ſuggeſt what another overlooks; and the community may profit, in making its reſolutions, both from the variety of materials

materials propoſed to their deliberation, and from the variety of underſtandings employed about them.—Or, if the conſtitution of the Church be ſo framed, as to intruſt even this branch of power to a ſmaller number; then this number, in conſequence of a peculiar deſignation, may well be expected to apply themſelves to the buſineſs more carefully, and more ſucceſsfully.

Even if theſe advantages were leſs than they are, there would not want ſufficient inducement for the union of a number of religious aſſemblies in one community. For it is of the higheſt importance to the intereſts of Religion, that it ſhould be conſiſtent and uniform in its outward appearance. Without *uniformity* public inſtitutions can never obtain their full effect. It is eaſy indeed for philoſophical men to ſeparate, in their imaginations, mere difference of opinion from every ſort of ill effect that has been apprehended from it. But, in the ordinary courſe of human affairs, doubt and diſcord are the inevitable conſequences of diſſenſion. Either the variety of religious forms ſhakes and ſubverts the belief of all Religion; or the warmth of oppoſition, whilſt it kindles mens zeal, ſuppreſſes and ſtifles every other virtue.

On theſe principles the authority of a religious community, both over the miniſters and members of particular congregations, may be ſecurely maintained: whether

reſiding in the community at large, or delegated to ſome certain perſons.—Yet ſtill it muſt be obſerved, that a Church thus framed cannot ſupport her power by *civil ſanctions*: ſhe can only take away what ſhe herſelf has given.

And, as no man is obliged to unite with any ſingle congregation, when the forms of its public ſervice appear to him unlawful; ſo every particular congregation is at liberty to remain ſeparate, if unable to join with any larger community on ſuch terms as their conſcience allows. Only, in both caſes, men ſhould be careful, not to break the uniformity of public Religion, nor to deprive themſelves of the benefit of religious ſociety, on ſlight or fanciful pretences. Nothing leſs than the moſt eſſential intereſts of Religion and Virtue will juſtify ſuch a ſeparation. But, whenever theſe intereſts appear to require it, men are, becauſe they *muſt* be, abſolutely at liberty; the community having no kind or degree of power over thoſe who care not to continue members of it.

3. One ſubject of inquiry ſtill remains—the alteration that may be produced by the intervention of the *magiſtrate*.—We ſee, by the hiſtory of all ages, that Religion, in the hands of ſelfiſh and factious men, is a very dangerous inſtrument. It therefore greatly concerns the public peace and ſafety, that all church-authority ſhould be under the

the controll of the *civil governor:* that *religious* aſſemblies, as well as others, ſhould be ſubject to his inſpection, and bound by ſuch rules as he ſhall ſee fit to impoſe.

THE moſt effectual method of obtaining this ſecurity is, to veſt the ſupreme power, Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, in the *ſame perſon.* The Church, as we have ſeen, is under no neceſſity of acting *collectively*; but may appoint at diſcretion, either ſingle men, or bodies of men, to frame and execute its laws. There is nothing in the nature of *temporal* power, that renders it unfit to be united with *ſpiritual:* but, on the contrary, much miſchief and danger in keeping theſe two branches of power ſeparate from each other. Why then may not the magiſtrate poſſeſs *both?* Why ſhould not the intereſts of Church and State (which are often connected, never oppoſite) be watched by the ſame eye, and guarded by the ſame hand?

THERE are indeed good reaſons why the *offices* of Religion ought not to be adminiſtered by the magiſtrate: both the education of his youth, and the attention of his riper years, have been employed on very different objects; and, amidſt the numberleſs toils and cares of government, it is impoſſible he ſhould find leiſure for any inferior profeſſion.—But, to ſuperintend all profeſſions, and all ranks

of

of men, for the common good, is itſelf a part of his office: and, by aſſuming the particular care of Religion, and the ſupremacy in religious matters, he is enabled to promote the intereſts both of Church and State in the moſt effectual manner.

FROM this ſupremacy of the civil magiſtrate is derived the proviſion of a legal *maintenance* for the miniſters of Religion. This proviſion is of great importance both to them and the public: as we may eaſily judge from the wretched and precarious condition of thoſe who want it; a condition which ſeldom fails to produce a ſlaviſh dependency, highly unbecoming a public teacher, and in ſome meaſure diſqualifying him for the diſcharge of his office.

AND will not the ſame reaſon ſerve peculiarly to recommend thoſe forms of government, in which the Clergy as well as the Laity are diſtributed into different ranks, and enabled to ſupport thoſe ranks in a becoming manner; that both the lower orders may avoid contempt, and the higher obtain diſtinction and regard?—Were *all* the miniſters of Religion placed in low ſtations of life, it is eaſy to ſee, with what neglect they would be treated, and with what prejudice their doctrine would be received. Poverty, and aukwardneſs, and ignorance of what is called the *world*, are diſadvantages for which the higheſt attain-

attainments in Learning and Virtue could never attone.

But to obtain compleatly the benefits* propoſed from this union of Civil and Eccleſiaſtical authority, all the members of the ſame Commonwealth ſhould be members alſo of the *ſame Church:* variety of ſects having a natural tendency both to weaken the influence of public Religion, and to give diſturbance to public peace. Where this is impracticable, not the beſt, but the *largeſt* ſect, will naturally demand the protection of the magiſtrate: and *every* ſect, whoſe principles are not evidently inconſiſtent with good government, will juſtly call for toleration. Protection is due to the firſt, that the advantages ariſing from the magiſtrate's care and favour may be extended as wide as poſſible: toleration to the laſt, beauſe the magiſtrate is equally unqualified and uncommiſſioned to perſecute for conſcience ſake.

It is ſcarce needful to obſerve, that theſe are only the outlines of Church policy; to be filled up in different ways, ſuited to the infinite varieties of human affairs.—

* See theſe benefits deduced at large, and in a very ſuperior manner, by the excellent author of "The Alliance between Church "and State," particularly in B. II. ch. ii.

But it may not be improper to obviate an objection, which may ſeem to ſtrike at the very foundation of the doctrine here advanced. It will be urged, perhaps, that I have conſidered a Church as an inſtitution merely *human*; whereas the *Chriſtian* Church derives its authority from God.—This will be readily admitted: but the Divinity of its origin is a circumſtance of no moment in the preſent inquiry. For there is not the leaſt reaſon to preſume, that the Founders of our holy Religion intended it to be governed by any rules, or on any principles, oppoſite to thoſe which Nature and Reaſon preſcribe. They appointed, indeed, miniſters, and offices of Religion: it was ſcarce poſſible for *any* Religion to ſubſiſt without them. They eſtabliſhed a form of Church-government: for the Church *muſt* be governed in *ſome* form, or there could be *no* government. But their directions to us are, for the moſt part, very general. Even their example muſt be cautiouſly urged, in different times, and under different circumſtances. In this one point they are clear and explicit, that authority once *eſtabliſhed* muſt be *obeyed*.

It follows from what has been ſaid, that all ſuch miniſters as accept a public maintenance, and yet refuſe to ſubmit to public authority, are guilty of injuſtice to the civil magiſtrate. Either they ought to acknowlege his power, or to relinquiſh his favour: they can have no claim

claim to *legal* advantages without obedience to law. And as miniſters, while employed by public authority, are not at liberty to depart from eſtabliſhed forms, or to aſſemble ſeparate congregations; ſo neither are the people at liberty, while they remain in ſociety, to deſert at pleaſure their lawful paſtors, and flock in crowds to receive inſtruction from thoſe who have no authority to give it. If they cannot lawfully comply with the terms of communion, let them make an *open* ſeparation: let them not profeſs to continue members of a Church, which they conſcientiouſly diſobey. In vain do men unite in Civil or Religious communities, if each individual is to retain intire liberty of judging and acting for himſelf. It is a liberty which defeats every poſſible good effect that ſuch union might produce; by ſubſtituting the caprice and folly of every diſordered imagination to the uniform obſervance of rules and laws, ſettled on deliberated advice, and inforced by lawful authority.

We need not look far for examples of theſe irregularities. Unfortunately the parties concerned are moſt of them out of the reach of rational conviction. They who appeal to their ſenſes, inſtead of their underſtandings, are only to be pitied, not confuted.

THERE is however *one* claſs of men, to whom this plea for compaſſion will not extend: thoſe I mean, who, without any pretence to Inſpiration, live in open war with the National Church; with that very Church, of which they profeſs themſelves Miniſters, and whoſe *wages* they continue to take, though in actual *ſervice* againſt her. Whether this conduct proceed from a diſlike to *all* eſtabliſhments, or from a deſire of erecting a *new* one, on the ruins of that which ſubſiſts at preſent: in either caſe, it is contrary to the moſt evident principles of Juſtice and Honour.

MUCH of theſe miſchiefs proceeds from the want of *rational* conceptions concerning God and Religion. A Religion founded on Reaſon willingly ſubmits to Human Authority in all points not *eſſential* to the cauſe of Piety and Virtue. But Enthuſiaſm and Superſtition are of a different complexion. Fond of every childiſh conceit, they ſcruple not to ſacrifice the peace of Nations to the ſlighteſt toys of a diſtempered fancy. To ſupport, or to oppoſe, an unintelligible doctrine; to retain, or to reject, an inſignificant ceremony; is thought by many an object of ſuch infinite concern, that no earthly good muſt ſtand in competition with it. — Not ſo the

Founder

Founder of our holy Religion; who has plainly taught us to diſtinguiſh between things of much and of little importance. Not ſo the beſt Philoſophy; which has drawn the *real* objects of controverſy within a narrow compaſs. Not ſo the dictates of Common Senſe; which will ever teach us to accept the benefits of Society on *practicable* terms, and to be content with much leſs than perfection.—No human inſtitution is free from faults: none therefore is ſecure from the attacks of a willing adverſary. But the very worſt Eſtabliſhment that ever exiſted is better than, what theſe men *ſeem* to covet, a ſtate of Anarchy and Confuſion.